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LETTER DATED 6 AUGUST 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALBANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to report to you the following:

Today, at about 1030 hours (GMT) Yugoslav military forces opened fire in the direction of the Albanian border, in the vicinity of the city of Tropoja (Northern Albania), killing, within 250 m into the Albanian territory, the Albanian citizen Fatmir Mara, and seriously wounding the Albanian soldier Ali Shehu, aged 20, and Djavid Ferizi, aged 25.

The Albanian Government considers the above incident as a very grave and serious provocation against the territorial integrity of the Republic of Albania, which further aggravates the already tense situation in the area.

The above provocative incident comes soon after the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania had issued a statement which categorically rejected a recent note of the Belgrade Government "On Border Incidents" qualifying the so-called incidents as pure intentional fabrication.

I should be grateful, Mrs. President, if you would have the text of the present letter and that of the attached statement of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Thanas SHKURTI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania

On 4 August 1993, the Belgrade Foreign Ministry delivered a protest note Nr. 184/11-93 to the Albanian Embassy in which the border guards of the Albanian Republic are accused of "opening fire on the 18, 24 and 27 July" in the direction of Jugoslav territory and patrols. Moreover, the note openly intrigues that in these recent incidents four armed monitoring observers of the European Community were present observing the border between Albania and the former Jugoslavia.

With regard to the above-mentioned note, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania deems it necessary to draw the attention of public opinion and the Jugoslav side to the following:

According to full investigation and information of the Department of Border Police of the Ministry of Public Order and local border authorities, on 18, 24 and 27 July 1993 there were no border incidents in the common border zones mentioned in Belgrade's note. Referring to accurate and verified data, the Albanian borderguards and civilians, Albanian citizens, have opened no fire in the direction of Jugoslav territory or border patrols.

Indignantly rejecting the concoctions of the note, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania recalls and draws the attention that it is the Jugoslav side that has systematically provoked grave events on the Albanian border, in which a considerable number of Albanian nationals have been killed and tens of others wounded. According to data of the Ministry of Public Order and Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Albania, in the first four months of 1993 only, in different zones of the State border between the two countries, 14 Albanian nationals have been shot dead by Serbian borderguards.

Such premeditated, unjustified killings happened on 2 February 1993, 2 March 1993, 21 March 1993 and 25 April 1993, during which in a single day eight citizens of the Republic of Albania were killed in cold blood and for no serious cause.

Regarding all these cases, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania by means of its notes of protest sent to the Authorities in Belgrade, has expressed its deep indignation at these premeditated deeds of the warmongering circles of Belgrade as well as its serious concern that such grave incidents aim at further aggravating the situation in the region. Such evident objectives cannot be disguised by the ridiculous manoeuvres of Belgrade to act the victim and "the provoked side", in the eyes of the international public opinion, aiming at distracting its attention from what is actually happening in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosova and elsewhere. The international community that attentively follows the events in the Balkans cannot but clearly see that the policy of permanent terror, assassinations, searches, maltreatment that the Serb troops of occupation and the Belgrade political authorities implement in Kosova are accompanied with border provocations against Albania simultaneously. They by all means seek to find a pretext to initiate an armed conflict seriously abusing the patience of the Albanians.

The Republic of Albania makes peaceful efforts to avoid any incident and to eliminate any precedent that leads to the aggravation of the political or military situation along the State border between the two countries. The border monitoring commission of the European Community, whose presence in Albania is a significant fact, has now and then testified to the correct actions, in conformity with international rules and norms of the border units of the Republic of Albania. This mission in no case has concluded that the incidents on the border between Albania and the former Jugoslavia have been provoked by the Albanian side. We are convinced that it will have its final say even on the recent Belgrade concoctions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania indignantly denouncing once more such perfidious methods used by the Belgrade Government, reiterates the known stand of its Government that any border incident or dispute should be discussed and settled by the joint border commissions and competent authorities to put an end to all unsavoury events that result in loss of life as are the many cases when Albanian nationals have been killed by the Serb borderguards. The Government of the Republic of Albania is showing an exemplary patience aiming at averting any conflict risking to bring the crisis in the region on the verge of a pan-Balkanic war. It is against any confrontation. It is for understanding and peaceful settlement of the conflicts and crises, especially the present tragic crisis in the former Jugoslavia, endeavouring to render its positive contribution in this respect.